

On a further visit on 3 October, I noticed a pair of Adonis Blues *Lysandra bellargus* (Rott.) *in copula*. The female was freshly emerged and possibly could be an example of a partial third brood. The rather tatty male was more likely to be a late second brood example.

There are several late butterfly dates worthy of mention. On 6 September I observed a Small Skipper *Thymelicus sylvestris* (Poda) caught up in a spider's web. It was still alive and I managed to release it. The last Small Heath *Coenonympha pamphilus* (L.) and Chalkhill Blue *Lysandra coridon* (Poda) were seen on 3 October on Afton Down and a female Adonis Blue *Lysandra bellargus* (Rott.) was observed just above the chalk-pit on 5 October. This is the latest date that I have ever seen this butterfly.

It was the warmest October since records began in 1659 and the warm sunny weather continued right up to the end of the month. On a further visit to Afton Down on 27 October I saw a very late freshly emerged male Meadow Brown *Maniola jurtina* L. which must have been an example of a partial second brood. The latest ever sighting in England of this species was on 2 November 1980 in Devon (Archer-Lock, *Ent. Rec.* 92: 266). On a sunny day on 31 October, I visited the same locality at eleven o'clock and noticed a small brownish butterfly flying at the top of the chalk-pit. I soon got close to it and observed that it was a female Long-tailed Blue *Lampides boeticus* L. It rested on some blackberry and sunned itself for several minutes before flying to another part of the chalk-pit. I went home to get a net but it had gone on my return. Other butterflies present on that day were two Painted Ladies *Cynthia cardui* (L.) and several Red Admirals *Vanessa atalanta* (L.). On 3 November, at noon, Andy Butler observed a further Long-tailed Blue in his garden at Ventnor. These are the first records for the Island for this species since the summer of 1952 when three were seen, one at Cranmore by J. Lobb, 30.vii.1952 (French, 1953, *Entom.* 86: 161) and a pair in my garden at Freshwater when my elder brother, Robin, succeeded in netting the female.

I would like to thank Dave Wooldridge for reading and commenting on the manuscript and Barry Angell, Andy Butler, Jim Cheverton, Gillian Langton, John Ralph and Ian Rippey for help and information in writing this note.— S.A. KNILL-JONES, Roundstone, 2 School Green Road, Freshwater, Isle of Wight PO40 9AL.

***Boreus hyemalis* (L.) (Mec.: Boreidae), nearly new to Suffolk**

Two specimens of the Snow Flea *Boreus hyemalis* (L.) were found amongst moss at Cavenham Heath, Suffolk on 20 January 2002 by myself and Roger Northfield from Cambridge University Zoology Department. Both were male examples and found 'hopping' on the common heathland moss *Dicranum scoparium* (Hedw.) about two hours before dusk on a dull, wet and windy day that reached a maximum of 10 degrees Celsius. I reported our find to Colin Plant who informed me that this is the first formal record of *B. hyemalis* from Suffolk.

Our find was the result of a number of years searching (often on hands and knees) in appropriate Breckland habitat and is the first time I have seen *Boreus*, though Roger recalled seeing it more than 30 years earlier while searching Suffolk heathland

with students from the Zoology Department. Colin's distribution information prompted Roger to scour the Cambridge University Entomology Museum's spirit collection where he found a tube containing five preserved specimens, three males and two females, labelled *Boreus hyemalis*, Foxhole Heath, Eriswell, Suffolk, 14 November 1968!

Thanks to Colin Plant for information concerning the current status and distribution of *B. hyemalis* and to Tim Pyner for identifying the moss for us.— MARCEL ASHBY, 30a Alexandra Road, London N8 0PP.

An oddity regarding the Small Angle Shades *Euplexia lucipara* (L.) (Lep.: Noctuidae)

When I first used a mercury-vapour lamp to attract insects, at Blackheath near here in 1959, the above distinctive moth was a rather common visitor to it. Yet here at Charlton, barely three miles distant, to which I moved in 1973, it seemed wholly absent and has remained so. There is no suggestion that *E. lucipara* is very local or, as far as I know, that it has become much rarer than formerly. I can offer no reason for this striking difference, which seems worthy of mention.— A. A. ALLEN, 49 Montcalm Road, Charlton, London SE7 8QG.

EDITORIAL COMMENT These local variations in abundance are a source of constant fascination for me and, no doubt, different factors will likely affect different species. I used to catch *E. lucipara* regularly, and regarded it as fairly common, in my former garden in East Ham (London) in the 1980s. Yet no more than 500 metres away from there, as the Small Angle Shades flies, I think I only ever caught it once in five years during the same period at the East Ham Nature Reserve. The larvae of this species feed on ferns, and in my former garden were certainly associated with the plants of Male Fern *Dryopteris filix-mas* growing there. The same fern grew in reasonable number in the nature reserve but did not produce the moth, though I did sometimes find larvae. If nothing else, Mr Allen's observations emphasise that a light trap alone is not sufficient to adequately record the moths of any site. As the late Maitland Emmet used to repeatedly say to me – there are those who run light traps ... and then there are entomologists!

Natural history as a diversion from war: the Privet Hawk-moth *Sphinx ligustri* (L.) (Lep.: Sphingidae)

As a teenager, I became very interested in natural history mainly because it was a natural escape from the Second World War, with all its attendant horrors. Life changed for me the day a bomb fell a few hundred yards from me as I was leaving school on my bike. I was blasted to the ground, smashing my violin case and surrounded by scurrying shrapnel. Up until then I had been a keen collector of crashed German aircraft "bits", shrapnel and bullets. The bullets had become